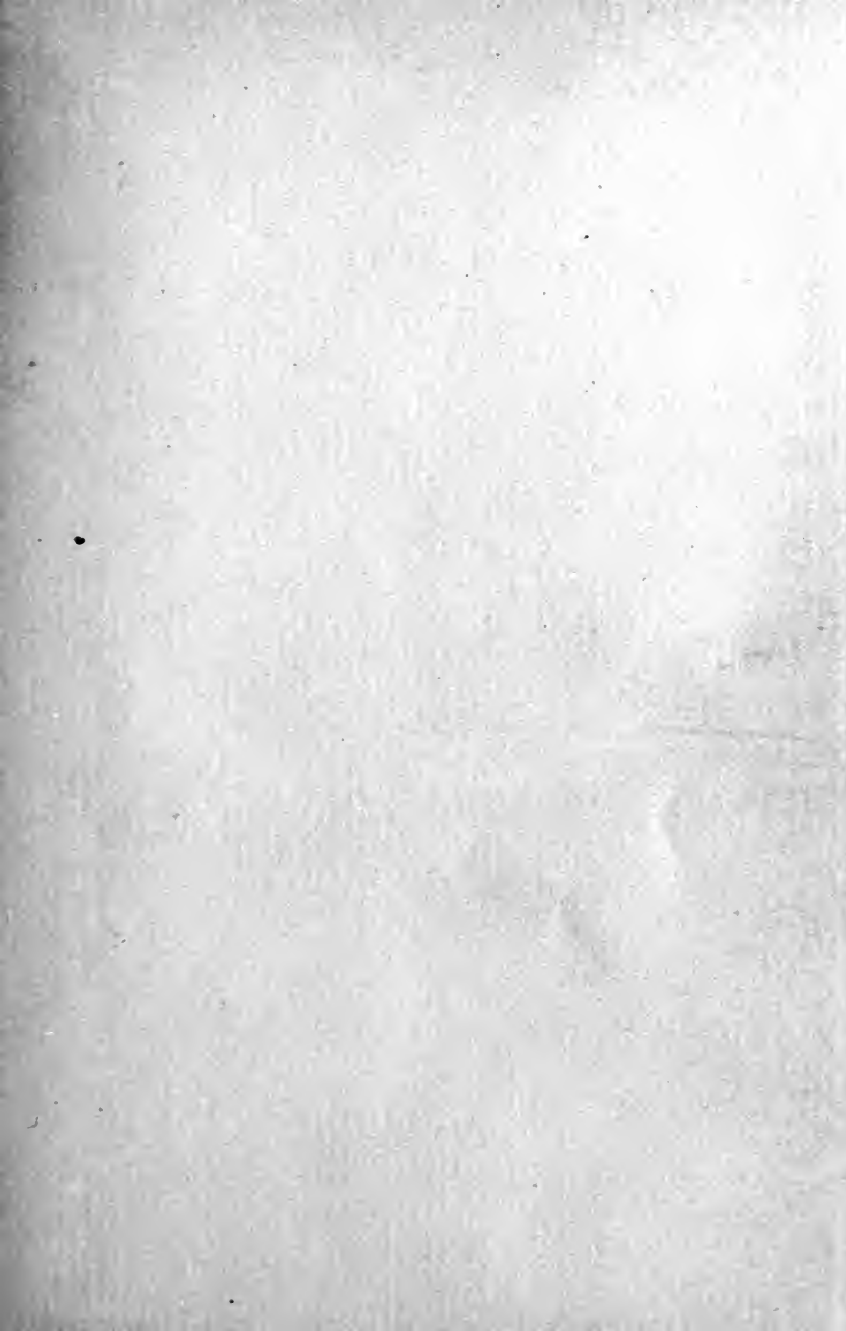


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MAKING A COUNTRY NEWSPAPER.



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MAKING A COUNTRY NEWSPAPER.

BEING A DETAILED STATEMENT OF THE
ESSENTIALS TO SUCCESS IN
NEWSPAPER MAKING.

By A. J. MUNSON.

1899:
THE DOMINION COMPANY,
PUBLISHER FINE BOOKS,
CHICAGO, U. S. A.

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Be civil to all;
serviceable to many;
familiar with few;
friend to one;
enemy to none.

—*Benjamin Franklin.*

MAKING A COUNTRY NEWSPAPER.

THE INTRODUCTION.

There are in the United States and Canada upwards of 15,000 weekly country newspapers. Of these only a few, perhaps not more than five hundred, approach that degree of perfection which the fields they occupy warrant. All country newspapers can not be equally good, but where the same conditions for making a good newspaper exist the results ought to be equal. Instead of being so, they are of all possible grades—good, medium, and bad, mostly bad. The business of publishing country newspapers is in the same condition as were our public schools before teaching became recognized as a work requiring special training. The faulty condition of the majority of country newspapers is due to the fact that they are published by men who have not had the necessary training. Many of the country publishers have drifted into the business from the farm, the school-room, the store, the law office, or the composing-room. Many of them are naturally bright and capable men who mean well, and, in some in-

stances, do well. They desire to publish good newspapers, but they have not had the training necessary.

To help them do so is the object of this little book. The author does not assume to know everything about the business of publishing a country newspaper. He has, however, during the last fifteen years, given much thought to the subject, has himself solved many of the problems that perplex the country publisher, and has noted the successful solutions made by other publishers. During much of this time he has had repeated opportunities to examine critically nearly every daily and weekly newspaper published in the United States and Canada. Whenever he has found any specially good ideas applied in either the business or editorial management he has noted them carefully and inquired into their success and the details of their application. The result of his experience, of the observations made, and of the information obtained he has crystallized into this little book, and he sends it out in the belief that it will be of practical value to those of his fellow workers who may be struggling to make better country newspapers and to obtain from their efforts better financial results.

THE MAN.

The belief prevails that a newspaper man must be all things unto all men. If this belief is founded upon any truth, it can be under limited conditions only. The city reporter, who has to deal with all kinds of men in the various circumstances of metropolitan life, may find it expedient to temper his actions with whatever may seem best suited to serve his purpose; but the country editor, who comes in contact with the greater number of his readers, and who is looked upon more or less as a pillar in the social and business structures of the community, must be firm and of unquestionable purpose and character. He, least of all, can be a "good lord, good devil" sort of man.

The qualifications which an editor should possess include nearly everything in the range of human knowledge. The more he knows of human activity, the better equipped he is for his work. The profession is much the same as that of the law, in that there is no knowledge that at some time is not likely to be of service. There are some things, however, that he can not get along without.

First: He must have acquired a general education. Particularly must he have a technical knowledge of

the language that he may express himself accurately and clearly. It is not enough for this purpose that he has studied a common school text-book on grammar. He must have pursued the subject in its higher branches, in rhetoric and logic, in synonyms and in the derivation and root meaning of words. He must have gone still further, and have acquired an easy and flowing style of expression by having familiarized himself with the diction of the best authors. Having pursued his preparatory work thus far, he is ready to begin qualifying himself for newspaper work. To write good newspaper English is an art in itself, that can be acquired only by practice and a systematic and careful study of the best examples found in the best newspapers. Having thoroughly drilled himself in these things, and being possessed of some inventive ability and a great deal of common sense, he may hope to write a readable newspaper. One of the greatest faults of country newspapers is that they are written in such a slovenly manner that they suggest the work of the primary schoolboy. A newspaper in which the simplest rules of syntax and diction are violated continuously can not maintain a respectable standing among that portion of the community whose good will is necessary to business success. Of one thousand readers perhaps only fifty notice these errors, but the good opinion of these

fifty may be worth more than the ignorant tolerance of the other nine hundred fifty.

Secondly: He should keep himself in touch with the best literature of the day, and should keep himself well informed on the political and other events of not only his own country but of the world. These may not enter into the make-up of his paper, but observing them will broaden his views and help him in doing better work in the field which he aims to cover. Particularly should he keep himself well informed on local politics. If he does not abuse what may be confided in him, many things which he may use and which will be of value to his paper will be given him. He must remember, however, that he is not all there is of his party in his county, and that it is much wiser and infinitely more profitable to concede to the opinion of the majority in his party than to assume the role of dictator. A bigoted man should not engage in newspaper work.

Thirdly: He should be of a sociable disposition. In smaller towns any business is helped by the sociability of the proprietor. Particularly is this true of that of the country editor. The sociable and society doings of a town come closer to the people than anything else, and the local newspaper should reflect them in its columns. In the cities most of the great business deals are set on foot at the clubs. By

mingling in the social life of the town the country editor will not only be able to give these things better presentation in his columns, but he will gain a standing that will help him in a business way.

Fourthly: He must be truthful and honest. Unless he is the former, things that will be injurious to his paper and ruinous to his business will find their way into his columns; and unless he is the latter, he will soon lose the respect and patronage of the business men.

Fifthly: He should understand and be able to analyze human nature. Next to a technical education this is the most essential qualification. Without it he will be tempted frequently to print things that will not only lose him friends and business, but may involve him in suits for libel.

Sixthly: He must have what is technically known as "a nose for news." By this is meant that he must not only be able to recognize news when it is visibly present, but he must have the ability to scent probable news. The best "stories" and the "scoops" are generally secured by those who have the ability to surmise what *may* happen when certain conditions exist, and who have the shrewdness to plan to be ready to secure these probable happenings the moment they occur.

There are many other qualifications that enter into

the make-up of an all around newspaper man, but the foregoing, coupled with a reasonable amount of common sense and a willingness to do hard work, will enable the possessor to make a fairly good country newspaper.

But there are many men now editing country newspapers who have not the foregoing qualifications, and who are not so situated that they can acquire them in the regular way. A few words to these about how they may fit themselves for doing better work than they are doing may not be out of place. The remarks which follow are intended to apply only to those who have not a technical knowledge of the language, or, having that, have no experience in the art of newspaper-making.

The question resolves itself into this, that he who has not must acquire. The next question is, how to acquire. The young man, who has the world before him, should arrange his affairs so that he can attend some good school a year or two where he can give special attention to language and literature. This is the shortest as well as the most practical and effective way.

But there are many who can not do this. These must do the next best thing, namely, study at home. This means work, hard work; but, then, nothing is gained without work. The average person who is

bright enough to become the publisher of a country newspaper is bright enough to master the principles of grammar, rhetoric, logic and literature if he sets himself to the work in earnest. Procure reliable text-books on the subjects and devote some time to them each day. Assistance in organizing the study can be obtained from some friend who understands the subjects. For this purpose the principal of the schools may be drawn upon, but for little or anything further, as most of them know less about the proper and practical use of English than does the uneducated country editor.

In addition to the text-book course, the student should plan a systematic course of reading. He should read carefully and studiously, noting all forms of expression that seem foreign to his way of saying things. When he finds such an expression he should not pass it until he has learned whether it is correct, and, if so, why? If correct, he should fix that point so firmly in his mind that he will ever after use it as accurately.

As a beginning in this work the student may be recommended to read Dickens for description, Bunyan for simplicity, and Shakespeare for profundity. The writings of Addison and Macauley may be recommended as containing the best examples of pure diction. The Bible should also be read carefully and

studiously, but only by those who are sufficiently well drilled in the rules of grammar to be able to modernize the Bible usages of the parts of speech.

For examples of the best newspaper English the student may be referred to the Evening Post and the Record, of Chicago, and to the Evening Post and the Sun of New York. These are the best examples of pure, dignified American journalism. For examples of how a "story" may be treated in a racy manner he may refer to any well established metropolitan daily newspaper.

The best plan of preliminary work in learning to write good newspaper English is to read and reproduce in one's own words the news stories in some good newspaper, and then critically compare the result with the original. Short stories should be selected at first, and as ability is acquired the longer ones may be used. This is an excellent drill, and one in which newspaper men of some experience may engage with profit.

One of the best ways of improving one's work is to have each issue of the paper read and criticised by some one of unquestionable ability, and let the critic mark all errors in diction, in editing, and in general appearance. In this way many habitual errors will be weeded out, and the general appearance of the paper improved. There are many country news-

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papers whose general appearance could be wonderfully improved were a single copy criticised according to this suggestion. What Pope said about our becoming so familiar with vice that we tolerate and finally embrace it, is applicable to the appearance of a newspaper. Seeing it continuously blinds us to its defects. We must have help to get out of the ruts.

THE FIELD.

Many men capable of making a good newspaper and a financial success of the country publishing business fail in both because they are located in unfavorable territory. As the farmer must have favorable soil and territory to raise profitable crops, so the newspaper publisher must have territory equal to his ability and the scope of his paper, if he would attain success.

What constitutes a favorable field depends on the size and kind of paper he desires to publish. A small town surrounded by good farming territory is to be preferred to a larger town not so surrounded. And, in general, an agricultural community is preferable to one in which mining or manufacture is the leading industry. Money may seem to flow more freely in the latter, but business is more stable in the former, being less subject to interruptions by political changes.

In gauging the field for a country newspaper the county should be taken as the unit, or territory, to be covered; for while some circulation will be secured outside the county, it will not be enough to be worthy of consideration as a matter of revenue.

The longer a county has been settled the more difficult it is to establish a new paper in it. It is also more difficult to launch a new venture in the eastern than in the western states. The older a community is the more fixed it has become in its likes and dislikes, and the less kindly it takes to anything new.

The distance at which a county is located from a metropolis must be considered. The further removed, the greater are the chances of success.

The kind of population is another important factor. A county inhabited largely by a foreign born population, not thoroughly Americanized, is to be shunned. Forty thousand of such population will contribute less to the support of a newspaper printed in the English language than will a population of ten thousand Americans, everything else being equal.

The ambition of the publisher will govern the selection of a field. If he is content to publish an average country weekly almost any village will serve his purpose. A town of a thousand inhabitants, located in a reasonably well populated county, will support one and sometimes two of the average country newspapers. It is possible in a town of that size to publish such a newspaper as will not only be the leading paper of the county, but will be a valuable property. In towns of from two thousand to three thousand inhabitants the chances for success are

reasonably well assured; and in towns of from three thousand to five thousand, with a proportionate county population, the opportunities for publishing an ideal weekly country newspaper are all that can be desired.

A county seat town of about four thousand population, having no daily newspaper, and located in an agricultural county of from thirty to forty thousand inhabitants, and not too near a metropolis, is as good a field as an energetic newspaper man need wish for in which to publish a weekly country newspaper. In a town having a daily the weekly will necessarily suffer, and this must be taken into consideration in planning the publication of a weekly.

In a territory well supplied with newspapers, especially in a county that has been settled a long time, it is better to buy a paper already established, although it may be suffering from bad editing and bad management, than to attempt to found a new one. Many disagree in this. It is true, however, that the greater the competition the lesser are the chances of success. Every newspaper, however insignificant, has its friends and readers. It costs time and money and hard work to secure these. The more newspapers there are the more difficult it is to secure them.

Buy a run-down newspaper, print all the news well edited, infuse push and sense into the business man-

agement, and success will come more quickly and last longer than by founding a new paper.

Generally speaking, wherever business is being done and there are people to read, a good newspaper will receive good support. Make, then, a good newspaper, and it will find its own field.

THE PLANT.

The mechanical outfit of a newspaper should be arranged to produce speed and neatness in the work. If time is valuable in any industry it is in making a newspaper. The same is true of neatness. Either publish such a newspaper that it will require a plant that will do rapid and neat work, or go out of the business. Do not print on a Washington hand press. The process is too slow and laborious. What is news when the paper goes to press will be unpublishable matter when the edition has been run off. If the field is not large enough to yield a sufficiently large circulation to warrant printing the paper on a cylinder press, it should be abandoned. Many fields in which papers are printed on hand presses would yield a good business if cylinder presses were substituted, so that larger and better papers and more of them could be issued. The time saved by printing on a cylinder press would help to make a better paper and to push its circulation. It does not pay to publish a country newspaper unless the circulation is at least 1,200—it should be 2,000. It does not pay to run such an edition on a hand press. Second-hand cylinder presses can be had at so low prices that it does not pay to

use any others. Presses that have been worn so they will not do fine printing, or are of too slow movement for continuous work, will print newspapers well, and if properly cared for will last a lifetime in a country newspaper office. The first essential, then, is a cylinder press with power to run it.

Brevier type is used so commonly as the body type of country newspapers that it may be considered as the standard. A smaller type is not practical, and a larger makes the page look too much like a poster. Brevier set leaded gives a clean and clearly printed page that can be easily read. If the type is leaded, a cheaper grade of paper may be used and still give good results.

Most country publishers make a great mistake in using too great a variety of display type in their advertising columns. They forget that simplicity is the greatest art. Fancy types and ornaments should not be permitted to go into the columns of a newspaper. When put there they destroy the effect sought after, and but show the hand of the novice. An advertisement set in one series of type may be artistic and effective, whereas if it is set in several series it becomes a jumble and an eye-sore. Two or three sizes of De Vinne, or the same of Jensen, together with one size of body type will produce a much more effective advertisement than if several other kinds

of type were also used. Most country newspapers would be improved in appearance and would be more effective to the advertiser if their display type consisted of but a series of Jensen, one of De Vinne in Roman and italics, and one each of ordinary and condensed Gothic. With these, and borders and rules to match, and body type in nonpareil, brevier, long primer and pica, fine advertising effects can be produced—much nicer and more effective than if ten or twenty more type faces were sprinkled over the pages.

The headings of country papers are generally too large and are surrounded by too much rule-work and white space. A small and plain heading in Roman type should be used. The same principle applies here as in the selection and use of display type. There should be no rule above the heading. The upper line of the heading should be on a line with the top rules on the other pages. The name and the type used in setting it should be selected so that the heading will extend nearly across the page. The practice of putting little boxes, containing announcements, at either end of the heading is not only abominable but idiotic in appearance. The space between the heading and the rule above the date line should be that of a pica slug. The date line should be set in plain type of long primer measure. It should be separated from the rule above and below by nonpareil slugs.

The rules above and below should be equal to two hair-line brass rules, six-to-pica, set side by side. Nothing should appear in the date line except the volume and number, the town and state where published, and the month, date and year of issue. If a date line is carried at the top of each page, a single line rule is all that is needed at the top of the page. If no headline is carried, two single-line rules separated by a lead may be used.

As time is valuable in a newspaper office, the subscription list should be kept in type that a mailing machine may be used.

The two most important things about a plant, then, is, a press that will do easy and rapid work, and plain display type and not too great a variety used at one time. As too many cooks spoil the broth, so too many kinds of type spoil the effect.

THE PAPER.

The size and policy of the paper must be governed by the field it is designed to cover and by the ability of the editor. A good newspaper must have a good revenue. If the field is small the paper must be correspondingly so, and a man of but little ability should not undertake to publish a large paper.

One mistake which publishers of country newspapers make is that they think that a country newspaper to be successful must not only be devoted to politics but must be intensely partisan. Where a country newspaper makes one dollar by being partisan it loses five. Few publishers realize how little revenue comes from their partisanship and how much they lose by it. Many make their papers partisan in hope of receiving political preferment that in nine cases out of ten never comes. If you are running a mouthpiece, do so openly; don't try to delude yourself and the public by an attempt to disguise it in the form of a newspaper. It does not pay, and it is dishonorable. The greater number of country newspapers had much better be politically independent, if not neutral. The function of a newspaper, in the

broadest sense, is to spread the news, political and otherwise—not to instigate partisanship. When the paper is so edited that every resident of the county can find all the news in it, and no offensive partisanship, it will be financially successful. Newspaper politics belongs to metropolitan journalism where a field sufficiently large to support it can be found.

Publishing a newspaper must be either a matter of business, or of having a channel through which to vent personal spleen. He who makes it a matter of business must, first of all, make his paper newsy, and, secondly, he must make it voice the better sentiment of the community.

News may be divided into three divisions: local, state and general. The local paper is bought for the local news it contains. This, then, determines the kind of news which should be given prominence in the country paper. It should contain all the important news of the county, giving prominence to that of the town in which it is published. If space permits, important events transpiring in adjoining counties, and even throughout the state, may be given.

It may be well to speak here of the ready-prints so much in vogue. It is bad policy to use these, unless one is publishing a paper in a field so limited that the news and revenue will not permit the setting of more than two or three columns of type. And as these

chapters are not written to apply particularly to that class of newspapers, it can not be taken as a model for consideration here. Very few readers care for, or even read, the ready-print side. Why, then, should the publisher make his paper look "machine made," and increase the expense in a direction where it is not appreciated? The extra cost of ready-print paper and the weekly express bills, if used in producing a smaller but home-print paper, would bring better results in value and appearance which would help swell the bank account. The expense of the ready-print will, in most instances, pay an extra compositor. This will mean several extra columns of local matter, a better paper, more readers, more advertising, and greater profits. A better arrangement would seem to be to order paper in large quantities to be shipped by freight, and do all the printing at home. Some plate matter must be used. Good literary and miscellaneous matter can be bought in plate form, and kept on hand ready for emergencies. A page of state and general news can be had regularly each week in plate form and at a low price. A paper printed on this plan would not be any more expensive than one in which ready-print is used, and would be much more effective in drawing readers and advertising. There is much profitable advertising business that such a

paper would get, that a paper using ready-print does not get.

An ideal country newspaper printed in a county seat town of from three to five thousand inhabitants, in an agricultural county of from thirty to forty thousand population, would contain eight pages of six or seven columns to the page, all printed at home. The first page would contain the important news of the county, written in "story" form, and having appropriate headings. The second page might contain three or four columns of the local news in paragraphs, and the remainder in advertising. The third page might contain some sketches of a local coloring and write-ups of institutions in the county, and the remainder in advertising. The fourth page should contain at least two columns of editorials, some editorial clippings of general interest, and the remainder in advertising. The fifth page might be filled with advertising, or it might contain the church, club, lodge and theater announcements, and the remainder in advertising. The remaining three pages could be devoted to the news sent in by correspondents, special communications of lesser importance, news from adjoining counties, state and general news in plate, miscellaneous plate matter and advertising.

It may seem at first a difficult matter to make such a paper; but when the proper organization has been

perfected, as explained under another heading, it will be no more difficult than is the making of the ordinary country newspaper. System and organization simplify everything. There is no work in which these are needed so much as in newspaper-making. The country editor who has no system of gathering news, but depends for his matter on what may be told him, is almost as helpless as a ship without rudder or compass. The making of a good country newspaper does not depend so much on a large expenditure of money as it does on knowing how to expend a little judiciously.

THE NEWS.

The local or country newspaper is read for the home news. This does not mean only the news of the town in which the paper is printed, but the news of the county. Unless all the important news of the county is printed, the paper will not circulate throughout the county. The majority of country publishers do not realize this, and as a result their papers are either financial failures, or only partially as successful as they might be. The publisher who accepts money for his paper and does not print all the news acts in bad faith, and is in nearly the same position as he who obtains money under false pretenses.

The first essential in making a country newspaper is to organize a news service so effective that all the important news will be printed every week throughout the year. There must be no guess-work about this. Nothing must be left to chance. The news service must be so effective that just as surely as anything happens in the county, just so surely will it come to the editor's desk. In making up a metropolitan daily it frequently happens that the news service is so extensive that more matter is thrown away than is printed, and that many a story that would fill a column

is cut down to a paragraph of three or four lines. Such a news service makes it possible to print all the important news, though much of it must be in brief form. The news service of the local paper should be organized to cover the county as thoroughly as the service of the metropolitan paper covers the world.

News-gathering may be reduced to a science almost as exact as that of mathematics. It is only a question of going at it right. Leave anything to chance, and the result is confusion. Trust to chance for news, and the paper will contain, at best, but an imperfect record of what has happened. Whether the village or the world is the paper's field, there are news centers that must be tapped regularly. For instance, the court-room is the place to get the facts in the case at bar, not from the gossip in the street. When we want pure water we go to the fountain; when we want news we should go to the news centers. The important thing then is to arrange to tap the news centers regularly.

In organizing the news service of a country newspaper the plan should be to cover the county. Such arrangements should be made that nothing of importance may escape. This demands a large corps of correspondents, general and special. These must be secured and instructed, and so managed that they will do the work expected of them.

And, first, something about general correspondents.

The average county contains sixteen townships, and each township at least five school districts or large neighborhoods. In each of these districts the paper should have a correspondent. These correspondents should be permanent residents, who will consider themselves responsible for what they write. These can best be secured by a personal canvass by the editor. It will take time to do this, but the success of the paper depends on its being done. Each correspondent should be instructed carefully in what constitutes important news, and what facts connected with an event are to be reported. Each must report every important news item promptly, and send at least one list of news items from his district each month. The names of these correspondents should be entered in an indexed record book. This book should be so ruled that a record may be kept of the postage and stationery sent the correspondent, that he may be kept supplied. Whenever he sends anything for publication an entry of the date of receiving should be made opposite his name in the record book. This record should be watched carefully, and the correspondents cheered on by occasional friendly letters to do their duty.

If stationery and postage is furnished, these correspondents will do this work for a copy of the paper regularly. The actual cost, then, will not be more

than \$50 a year. Each of these correspondents should be made the agent for the paper in his district, and allowed a small commission for securing subscribers. This plan will bring hundreds of new subscribers and many renewals each year, besides increasing the correspondents' interest in the paper and enthusing them to do good work.

So much for the general correspondents. Now for the specials.

Do you want the news of all the deaths that occur in your county? Whether you do or not, you should have it. You can be certain of getting it in one way only: from the undertakers. Aside from the family physician they are the first to be informed when a death occurs. Undertakers generally have time hanging on their hands. Make every undertaker in your county your special correspondent. Do you want all the justice court news? This you must have. To get it make every justice of the peace in the towns and villages of your county your special correspondent. You must have all the church news. To get it make every preacher in the county your special correspondent. In the same way you must have all the school news. The county superintendent can furnish it. Make him your special correspondent. The doctors should be your special correspondents on accidents, epidemics, births, etc. Every county official, as far as

possible, should be a special correspondent on county matters. There should also be a special correspondent in every club and lodge. The railway station agents can furnish much excellent matter. This plan may be enlarged, but enough has been said to suggest how the field may be covered thoroughly.

The specials must be furnished with addressed postal cards and stamped and addressed envelopes and paper. Usually the specials will do this work for the paper regularly and the advertising which the news they furnish gives them. If further compensation is suggested, a two or three line advertisement may be run regularly in the paper for each. The news which these persons can furnish is important, and must be secured in some way. The above plan for getting it is feasible and practical. All correspondents should be instructed to use the telephone and telegraph when possible and necessary to get important news through in time for publication.

There are some things that cannot be entrusted to the correspondents—things that require special skill to handle. For these the editor must make special arrangements. Among these are, sessions of the circuit court, important trials, heinous crimes, sessions of the board of supervisors, the county fair, political and other conventions, interviews, important public improvements, etc. The editor, or some competent per-

son for him, should each week do the court house or county offices. In the offices of the county clerk and the clerk of the circuit court is a wealth of valuable matter. If access to the court files can be had a competent news gatherer can dig out much valuable matter pertaining to cases in court. If this privilege is not abused it may usually be had.

As the matter from the correspondents comes in it must be edited carefully. With such a force it is to be expected that much matter will be duplicated by the different correspondents in the same section. The editor must guard carefully against anything being duplicated, as to duplicate is one of the great sins in newspaper work. Some things he will have to cut out altogether, others he will have to boil down, and others pad up, while in some instances he may have to send for more information that he may make the kind of story the event warrants. Trivial items should always be cut out of a correspondent's report. The news service outlined here is so extensive that only important and valuable news can have space. John Smith may be pleased to read in the paper that he is husking corn, or that he has a sick calf, but those who pay their money for the paper are entitled to something better than such trivialities. Neither must the correspondents be permitted to kick their neighbors through the paper. Small items reported by the cor-

respondents may be run under the name of the locality from which they are sent. If, however, an item is important it should be taken from the list and made into a story, with a proper heading.

It may seem unnecessary to say anything about the editor's work, but as this is written for the less experienced, the story will be continued a little further. The editor should keep an assignment book, not for his correspondents, but to guide him in his own work. In this he should record under the proper dates all known future events, that he may arrange at the proper time to have them covered. If it is something that one of the correspondents can handle, the correspondent should be advised in due time what to get out of it. In this book, or a similar one, he should have a place to jot down ideas that may come to him for special stories, sketches, etc., to be worked up during spare hours. Many valuable ideas are lost by not following this plan. The capable newspaper man can prepare much matter along these lines that is purely local, or that has a local coloring, that will make his paper intensely interesting and popular. For instance, in the average county are many old people who can tell many an interesting story of earlier days. In counties where the pioneers are still living there is no limit to this kind of matter. Any old churchyard furnishes texts for volumes of good local stories of a

reminiscent character. The histories of the local churches, sketches of their former pastors, etc., are good subjects. The schools furnish another set of themes, as their principals, their teachers, pupils who have become prominent, etc. This may be continued to include all local organizations, and when put in the form of the news story is read eagerly and appreciated. The more local matter is crowded into the paper and the better it is prepared, the better the paper will sell, and that is the end sought.

If more matter is needed than is outlined in the foregoing, important news from adjoining counties, from the congressional district, and even from the state at large, may be used. This can usually be clipped from exchanges and be rewritten.

To make a successful country newspaper, then, print all the local news all the time and in as good a style as you can prepare it. To attain success in any line requires hard work. The business of making a country newspaper is not exempt from this rule.

THE CIRCULATION.

One of the problems which the country publisher looks upon as most difficult of solution is how he may secure the circulation for his paper that its field warrants. As country newspapers average, there is scarcely more than one in every hundred that is worthy of such a circulation. In most communities there are too many newspapers for all to have successful circulations; and, also, in most communities there are too many for all to continue in existence as profitable business enterprises. From one-fifth to one-third of those now in existence might cease publication and the country would not realize an "aching void" or a "long felt want." It is a noticeable fact that when a county is but half developed in material resources it has more newspapers than later when it is more fully developed. The law of the survival of the fittest governs in this as in most things.

The first thing to do in seeking circulation is to publish a good newspaper. Set the circulation mark at such a figure as the field warrants, and then make as good a paper as you could afford to do if you had that circulation. Having done this, you are ready to set about securing the circulation. It must be under-

stood, however, that this plan is the sequence only of the advice that has been given in the preceding pages in regard to what kind of a paper to publish. If you are publishing a personal mouthpiece, or a party organ, all the plans in the world will avail but little in building up a general circulation.

The American people are greater buyers of reading matter than are any other people. They are greater buyers of periodical reading matter than are any other people. Our population is about 75,000,000, and we have about 20,000 periodical publications, ranging from the daily newspaper to the quarterly review, or one periodical publication for every 3,750 of our population, counting men, women and children, white and black, literate and illiterate. The local or country newspaper is particularly well supported. There are very few families who cannot afford the local paper, and many buy all of them. But whether they buy one or many, they may be depended on buying the one that gives them the most and best for their money.

Having arranged to publish a paper that will sell, it must be borne in mind that in this day patronage is secured successfully through solicitation only. This is true in circulating a country newspaper. The plans and schemes that may be employed to secure circulation should be considered only as aids to the solicitor. The first thing to do, then, is to secure one or more

good solicitors to make a canvass of the county. A list of the names of the voters of each township, together with their addresses, should be secured. To all of these the paper that will sell should be sent regularly, as sample copies, until the canvasser has called on them. The canvasser should have a copy of this list of names and should canvass by townships, not leaving a township until he has called on all that can be found. This is the most practical and effective way of securing a circulation.

The plan some country publishers have of advertising premiums, and combination offers with other publications, is not to be recommended. Such schemes do not materially increase the subscription list and have a decidedly cheapening effect on the value of the paper, a thing to be avoided above everything else. Teach the public that the value of your paper is the price you ask, and you will receive that price more readily than if you offer them a house and lot with every annual subscription. The scheme that will best secure a large and constant circulation is to print all the news all the time, in well edited and attractive form, and let the people know it through sample copies and good solicitors.

If you want to use a scheme to help secure subscriptions, the following may be recommended as possessing the merit of having proved successful:

The plan is a modification of the coupon system that has been used advantageously in many lines of business. Its object is to give the paper without any cost to the reader, to increase the publisher's income from subscriptions, and to make the advertising columns more effective to the advertiser. In this way it serves a three-fold purpose.

Use coupons printed in handy card form, each containing five 5-cent checks. Each coupon should contain a brief explanation of the system, like this: "One of these 5-cent checks will be accepted as a 5-cent payment on every dollar's worth of cash trade at the stores listed in The Tribune." When a subscriber pays you money on subscription give him coupons to the amount of the money he pays. Arrange with some of your leading advertisers to accept these checks on trade at their stores. Because of the additional trade which this system brings, merchants are glad to accept the checks. As a consideration for having the privilege to accept them the publisher can insist on the merchant contracting for a certain amount of advertising space to be used during the year. If the amount of the space is made large enough the publisher may agree to redeem a part of the coupons, say 20 per cent., by deducting that amount from the amount of the merchant's advertising account. This,

however, is not necessary. The increase in trade will justify the merchant in accepting the coupons.

Where this plan has been tried the experience has generally been that the merchants were more anxious to accept the coupons than the publisher was to have them do so. If the publisher uses tact, this plan will help him fill his advertising columns with profitable advertising; and it has been demonstrated time and again that the plan increases the circulation.

If adopted, the plan must be well advertised. In fact, its success depends very much on the way it is presented to the people. Not only should the paper contain announcements, explanations and commendations of the plan, but circular matter should be used freely throughout the county.

A list of the merchants accepting the coupons should, of course, be kept in the paper as long as the plan is employed.

This is a good plan to use where solicitors are employed in the circulation department. A good solicitor can easily make a prospective customer see that on this plan he gets the paper absolutely free.

But, after all, we come back to the first principle that the best possible plan is to make a good paper. Without this every plan and scheme will fail.

THE ADVERTISING.

The most common difficulty that the country publisher meets in his efforts to fill his paper with profitable advertising is the worn-out statement that advertising does not pay. As a rule country business men know so little, if anything, of the principles of advertising that the advertising they do does not pay. This, however, has nothing to do with the fact that advertising does pay when properly done. There is nothing in the range of human activity that pays if it is not done right.

It is as true as the moral law that advertising in a paper such as has been described in these pages will pay if done right. If the business men of the county do not know how to advertise profitably, the publisher must teach them. If the publisher does not know how, he must learn. Failing in this, he must get along the best way he can without profitable advertising, as a punishment for having undertaken a business for which he is not fully qualified.

This chapter cannot be a text on the principles of advertising. A few things only affecting the interests of the publisher can be noted. There are two things the publisher must do to make it possible for

him to secure profitable advertising. First, he must place a fair and reasonable price on the advertising space he has to sell. Most country publishers ask too much for advertising space. In general advertising an agate line is worth one-half cent for each thousand of the circulation. At this rate an inch of single column space in a paper having a circulation of two thousand is worth fourteen cents. For local advertising, space in the local paper is worth more than this, but rarely as much as most country publishers ask for it. A good plan is to ask a reasonable price for space and make an extra charge for the actual cost of setting the advertisement. By this plan all advertisers will pay the same price for space, and each will pay for the kind of work he has done in the setting of his advertisement. In other words, he pays for what he gets, and nothing more.

Secondly, the publisher must have the advertisements set in good, effective style, and see to it that the advertising columns are made up to produce the best possible effect for results. This is very important, for no matter how good the advertising matter may be, if it is not handled right by the printer it will not bring the desired results. There are few country papers in which the advertising columns are not so jumbled as to be disgusting in appearance. From a typographical standpoint they should be the most attractive parts of

the paper. There are no newspapers in the world in which the advertising matter is so uniformly well arranged as in the Chicago dailies. These may be studied profitably by publisher and printer; and as the advertising matter they contain has been prepared by experts, they may be studied to advantage by the advertiser.

The principal reason why country merchants fail to advertise profitably is that in their advertisements they do not talk specifically about the article they want to sell, nor do they give prices. They must learn the Wanamaker system. If the reader is at all interested in an article he wants to know all its good points. If these are favorable, he wants to know the price. If this is satisfactory, he becomes a buyer, and the advertisement has served both seller and buyer. If no misrepresentation has been made, the sale of this article may have created a steady customer, the profit on whose trade may become large enough to pay for the advertising necessary to secure a hundred more customers like him.

If the merchants of a town do not understand the principles of good advertising, and if the publisher does, a good plan is to organize a local advertisers' club, at the meetings of which the subject may be discussed with profit to both sides.

Many books and periodicals on advertising, written

by men who have made advertising a life-study and who are recognized as successful advertisers, are published. The country publisher should be a close student of these. They give him information that means money to him.

The publisher should never talk about his advertising space as being anything but a commodity as staple as sugar or wheat. He should have a definite time for closing his forms, and should stick rigidly to that time. This will inspire respect for his business and establish the truth that advertising space is valuable. The man who will stop the press to insert an advertisement for which he may receive twenty-nine cents should quit the business.

One of the best ways to solicit local advertising, after the business man has become interested, is to go into his place of business and prepare a good advertisement of some of his seasonable goods, and read it to him. If the work has been well done, he will generally order it to be inserted. Change copy for him weekly, and he will soon become a regular advertiser because it pays him. Always remember that a country merchant does much work, and that he seldom has time to prepare advertising matter. This, together with the fact that frequently he is one of those who does not know enough to write anything that he would care to see in print, makes him hesitate in making an

attempt. Handle him in the right way and he becomes your patron. Never let him carry an advertisement that is out of date, even though he is willing to pay for it.

If the hints given here are observed the publisher will get advertising patronage. Furthermore, the kind of work that will bring readers will bring advertisers. There are many schemes used to secure subscribers and advertisements, but where a permanent business is desired they do more harm than good. Make a good paper, and push it earnestly along legitimate lines, and you will secure both readers and advertisers.

A word about foreign advertising. It is not good policy to burden the paper with this, unless reasonable rates can be secured. And even then special positions should not be sold in such a way as to disfigure the appearance of the paper. Certain parts of the paper should be set aside for advertising, and nothing should be permitted to go beyond the "deadline." Publishers who accept foreign advertising generally have to give it positions that injure the paper, and frequently they receive less for it than they do for local advertising that takes positions within the prescribed limits.

THE HEADINGS.

There is nothing that gives so neat and intelligent an appearance to a newspaper as well written and properly arranged headings to the principal news stories and divisions of matter. To write these is one of the most difficult tasks in newspaper work. It can be done successfully only after much study and practice. However, it is not so difficult that he who will work cannot learn.

Either country editors cannot write headings or they do not realize the importance of them in the value they add to the paper, for there are very few country papers that have as much as a decent excuse for headings, and what they have are generally so much out of proportion and arranged in such confusion that the appearance of the papers would be improved if the headings were omitted.

Country editors using patent insides or plate matter in their papers should adopt the style of headings used in the patent or plate matter. Not only should they write their own headings on the same plan, but they should set them in the same faces of type. This will give the paper a uniformity of appearance that will be pleasing to the reader.

The editor whose paper is all printed at home should adopt at least three styles of headings to suit the length and importance of the different articles that may appear in the sheet. One of these headings should consist of three parts, another of two parts, and the other of one part. The following examples illustrate the plan :

[No. 1.]

VOICES ARE FOR REFORM

BUSINESS MEN CONDEMN PRESENT ASSESSMENT PLAN.

**At the Business Men's Convention the
Sentiment Is General That the Present
System of Levying Taxes Is
Unjust—Changes Offered.**

[No. 2.]

ASSESSMENT PLAN UNJUST.

**Business Men Condemn It at Their
Convention.**

[No. 3.]

Condemn Assessment Plan.

The faces of type used in the above headings may vary, but the sizes, both in points and in extension, should be maintained. Heading No. 1 should be used on the longest and most important articles. Heading No. 2 should be used on articles of about the length of two sticks-full or more. Heading No. 3 should be used on articles shorter than those requiring heading No. 2.

A style-card should be printed for the guidance of compositors. On this card each face and size of type used in the headings should have a number, and information should be given about the number and size of leads or slugs to be inserted between the lines. Then in writing headings the editor should follow each line or paragraph of the heading with the number of the size of type, as given on the style-card, in which he wants that line or paragraph set. By adopting this plan there will be no confusion when there is a change of compositors.

It may not be out of place to give an illustration of how headings are frequently written for country papers. Three county seat weeklies contained the story of the burning of a little town located in the county. It was the most important news of the week. Here are reproductions of the headings of the story as they appeared in the three papers:

[No. 1.]

FIRE!!!

[No. 2.]

THE FIRE!

[No. 3.]

THE FIRE FIEND.

According to the plan of headings outlined in the foregoing, the story warranted a heading something like this:

ILLIVARO BURNS DOWN

**BUSINESS DISTRICT REDUCED
TO ASHES.**

**Fire Starts Early in the Morning and
Destroys \$60,000 Worth of Business
Property—No Lives Lost—But
Little Insurance.**

The important requisite in a heading is that it tell what follows. The next is that it be catchy and have a pleasing ring to it. Frequently the reader has time to read the headings only. It is therefore important that they be so constructed that they tell the story.

Writing headings requires genius and inspiration. But all who are called on to write headings have not these aids. To those who are not favored with the possession of genius and inspiration, the following rules will be helpful:

1. Do not begin a line or division of the heading with figures.

2. Do not use figures in the first, or key line.

3. Do not begin a line or division with "a" or "the," and avoid beginning either with "an."

4. Every line and division should contain a verb.

5. The verb in a line or division should be in the present tense; but whichever tense is used, it should be preserved throughout the heading.

6. Do not repeat a principal word in any of the divisions of a heading.

7. Avoid the use of the auxiliary verb "be." Its use tends to weaken the line. "Illivaro Burns Down" is stronger than "Illivaro Is Burned Down."

8. Do not comment in a heading. Use the editorial columns for comment.

9. Do not accuse or condemn in a heading. "Smith

Is a Thief" is not the same as "Smith Held on Charge of Theft," although the former may be a more catchy line. The word "allege" is a safe one to fall back upon in all matters of crime.

10. Construct all headings so that they will conform exactly to the style adopted.

As before intimated, there are few men who can construct brilliant headings. However, by a little study and practice, and a careful observance of the foregoing rules, anyone of average intelligence and some experience as a newspaper writer will be able to write headings that will answer the purpose.

As a drill in learning to write headings the following is recommended: Select a good metropolitan newspaper in which the style of headings is similar to that in your paper. Let a friend take an issue that you have not examined and number the headings and stories with corresponding numbers, and then cut out the headings. When this has been done, read the stories and write headings for them. Compare the headings you have written with those that were in the paper. This will demonstrate your weakness, if you have any. If you have any talent or genius and will persevere in this course, you will in time become an expert writer of headings.

THE DAILY.

One important question that comes to many a country publisher is when to begin publishing a daily. The best answer that can be given is that he postpone it just as long as he can without yielding the field to some one else. In many a printing office in towns of 4,000 population and more, are stored away as relics the accessories of a defunct daily that had been started too soon to live. These evidences of failures are warnings that it is not wise to rush into daily publishing before it is necessary.

In starting the first daily in a town of from 4,000 to 10,000 inhabitants the determining fact should be whether the town is a growing one. If it is not, or is likely to diminish, it would be a foolish business proposition to start a daily, unless a satisfactory patronage can be secured for it beginning with the first issue.

If the town is growing and has prospects of continuing to grow it is only a question of time when a daily will be published in it, and he who is first in the field will be most likely to secure the harvest. Under such circumstances the publisher of one of the strong weeklies may be wise to begin publishing a daily. Even

then he should not do so unless he is prepared financially to carry the venture a year or two without profit, or at a loss if necessary. It is common experience that in nine cases of ten under such circumstances a daily will not pay its way the first year or two. The loss may and may not be much. It is a lottery. But if the town grows the time will come when the daily will be a good property.

In considering the publishing of both a daily and a weekly in a town of this size it must be taken into account that the daily will lessen the local patronage of the weekly. This loss may, however, be made up in that nearly all the matter prepared for the daily may be used in making up the weekly. This will make the weekly stronger and secure for it greater patronage in the farming districts.

In publishing a daily there are many problems to be solved that do not come up in connection with a weekly. The mechanical department must be strengthened, more effort must be made in gathering news and soliciting business, and the paper must be delivered to the readers. This necessitates the organizing of four distinct departments: news, business, mechanical and circulation. To organize these effectively the publisher should possess the experience gained by being employed in the office of a well conducted country daily. If he has not this experience he will have to

get it by paying for it as he progresses in the work.

With the addition of a young man as reporter for the local field, and daily plates of outside news, the news service outlined for the weekly will do very well for the daily. If the importance of the daily is such as to require and warrant it, the pony service of the Associated Press may be taken.

Having arranged to make as good a paper as the field warrants, the next thing is to secure a circulation for it. So many plans have been employed to secure this, all having been successful in some places and failures in others, that none can be recommended as infallible. A circulation cannot be obtained unless the people want a daily. Not having had a daily, the people do not know whether or not they want one. Neither does the publisher know. He must ascertain this in the quickest and most direct way. The only way to do this is to give them the paper. Deliver the paper regularly at the homes week after week for a few months if necessary. This will tell the story. In time they will either subscribe or request that it be not delivered. The voluntary subscription will become an index to public sentiment for or against the paper, and will govern the publisher in his continuing or discontinuing the paper. The best patronage that a daily can hope for is one subscription to every ten of the population.

The publisher of the country weekly who contemplates issuing a daily can assure himself of the fact that he will find that the enterprise will involve more hard work, expense, responsibility and anxiety than he counts on when making his plans.

THE STYLE.

The trained writer for the press has a way of presenting things so as to interest us from the beginning. Not only does he give us the information in concise form, with just enough coloring to make the picture attractive or repulsive, according to end sought, but his style has a ring and a swing, a sort of billowy motion, that gives us pleasure. He can take the most commonplace event and make of it an attractive story, and without making it seem overdrawn. It requires genius to do this. But all good newspaper writers are not men of genius. We have many well written newspapers, but only a few men of genius in the newspaper profession. Most of the men who write these newspapers have learned to do so by hard work and the observance of a few simple rules that govern in the construction of newspaper English.

To the uninitiated the term "newspaper English" no doubt sounds odd. However, there is such a thing. The trained writer does not use the same style in writing a newspaper that he uses in writing a book or a magazine article. The reason is obvious. The newspaper is read hurriedly—glanced at, as it were.

To meet with approval it must be so written and arranged that the busy man can glean its contents in a few minutes. Not so with the book and magazine. These are reserved for leisure hours. If the young man, beginning his career as a newspaper man, will bear these things in mind and bend all his energies to apply them in his work, he will wear the laurel wreath before he is honored with the frosted crown of years.

Newspaper English to be good must be simple and concise. Clearness and brevity of statement are all-important. This does not imply that the narrative should be limited to a few facts. On the other hand, every fact must be stated or the story will not be clear. But the facts should be stated in the fewest and simplest words. Pompous words and phrases should be avoided. Slang and undignified expressions should not be tolerated. Finely rounded periods are out of place in a newspaper. Let these be reserved for the oration. Short sentences should predominate. The beginner, particularly, should hesitate to use long or compound sentences. Usually his long sentence will be much better if separated into two short ones. Every sentence must add a fact to the narrative. If it add but one fact it is all the stronger. In walking we take one step at a time. It is exceedingly awkward and laborious to attempt to take two. Do not

make your readers feel that reading your paper is like making an effort to walk by taking two steps at a time. "Marley was dead" is much stronger and impressive standing alone than it would be if several other facts were tacked to it.

Next to short sentences, brevity of statement is important. Space should not be occupied that can be filled with more important matter. It costs money and takes time to put unnecessary words in type. Then comes the expense of paper and ink to print them. And think of the time the reader wastes. The writer should bear in mind that the average newspaper reader has but little time to give the paper. In that time he wants to get the most out of it. The careful writer can save twenty per cent. of valuable space by a pruning of superfluous words, and intelligent condensation, without sacrificing an essential fact.

A good newspaper article must not only contain all the facts, but these must be so arranged that the narrative will be striking. The reader's curiosity must be aroused in the first paragraph, or he may not read what may prove to be an important article. More ingenuity is required to write the first paragraph of a newspaper story than to write a column of what may follow. A safe plan to adopt is to write the newspaper article, however brief, on the plan of a play or a novel. Let the first sentence or paragraph tell the

most interesting and important fact. Tap the reservoir at once and let the stream flow rapidly. Never lead up to the facts with an elaborate and meaningless introduction. If you attempt to stop a street fight you rush at once to the principals. You don't begin by arguing the matter with those standing by. Begin the newspaper story on the same plan. The driest routine matters may be made attractive by a clever arrangement of the facts. Reports of the meetings of the board of aldermen afford the most conspicuous examples of the writer's skill or lack of skill in routine work. These reports generally begin with, "The board of aldermen met last night, the president in the chair." There may be conditions under which it would be proper to begin a report in that way, but it would be only in a case where the board had been restrained from meeting by some extraordinary cause that had enlisted public attention. In other words, in a case where the fact that the board met was more important than anything done at the meeting. In writing an account of a fire the untrained man usually begins by telling when, how and by whom the fire was first seen, following this with fact upon fact of minute details, with here and there bits of lurid description and comment until the reader loses patience in his search for the meat in the nut. By this plan he preserves unity as taught in the schools, but his

"copy" will not be recognized after having passed the copy reader. A young reporter of the writer's acquaintance began his story of a fire that caused the death of seven persons, the wounding of others and the destruction of property to the amount of \$400,000, in this way:

"Seven persons were burned to death this morning. Of eleven others, some were either badly burned or otherwise injured."

That was all the first paragraph contained. The next paragraph told briefly when and where the fire had been and the building that had been burned. Then followed a list of the dead and injured, after which he launched out into a full statement of all the facts interspersed with bits of description to make the scene vivid.

He selected the strongest and most important facts for the beginning of his story—the facts that would interest the reader the most. He told them briefly so the eye could catch their import at a glance. Such a beginning gave him a foundation on which he could build a story several columns long and hold the reader's attention to the end. And that is the secret of newspaper writing. Hold the reader's attention and the paper will sell. And there is the end sought. If the paper won't sell there is no use to write it.

The position of the country editor is such that he

must do a little of everything. It is a case of the "up-stairs" and "down-stairs" centering in one person. To do good work he should separate his editorial work from that connected with the business office. He can not write a good newspaper if he is constantly interrupted by business details. If he has a home he should have a room in it set apart to be used as editorial room. Here he should do his important work, such as writing editorials, reading exchanges and preparing the more important news articles. If he has such a room and will spend an hour or two in it each day, he will edit a much better paper, and with less worry, than if he tries to be editor and business manager at the same time. He can then go to the office with no worry about "copy," and can apply himself with a light heart to the business end and to gathering news. This plan has the added advantage that having such a "den" he will give many an hour, that would otherwise be lost, to making a better newspaper. James Scott, the young man who swung the Chicago Herald into the saddle of success, had such a room in his home, and it was in that room that the leaders were prepared and the business plans perfected that placed the Herald in the front ranks of western newspapers.

Newspaper writing must be done hurriedly. This leads often to careless diction and the use of bad ex-

pressions. Many of us sin so frequently that we embrace vice as a familiar friend. It may not be out of place to call attention to some of the more common faults.

William Cullen Bryant was recognized as the writer of the purest newspaper English in his day. Here is reproduced the famous "Index Expurgatorius" which he was accustomed to serve upon all writers connected with his journal, with the direction that the words in this list are to be avoided. According to Bryant's standard, don't use

Above and over for "more than."

Artiste for "artist."

Aspirant.

Authoress.

Bagging for "capturing."

Balance for "remainder."

Banquet for "dinner" or "supper."

Beat for "defeat."

Bogus.

Casket for "coffin."

Claimed for "asserted."

Collided.

Commence for "begin."

Cortége for "procession."

Cotemporary for "contemporary."

Couple for "two."

Darkey for "negro."

Day before yesterday for "the day before yesterday."

Début.

Decease as a verb.

Democracy applied to a political party.

Develop for "expose."

Devouring element for "fire."

Donate.

Employé.

Endorse for "approve."

En route.

"Esq."

Gents for "gentlemen."

Graduate for "is graduated."

"Hon."

House for "house of representatives."

Humbug.

Inaugurate for "begin."

In our midst.

Is being done, and all passives of this form.

Item for "particle, extract or paragraph."

Jeopardize for "jeopard."

Jubilant for "rejoicing."

Juvenile for "boy."

Lady for "wife."

Lengthy for "long."

Leniency for "lenity."

Loafer.

Loan or loaned for "lend" or "lent."

Located.

Majority, relating to places or circumstances, for "most."

Mrs. President, Mrs. Governor, Mrs. General and all similar titles.

Mutual for "common."

Official for "officer."

On yesterday.

Ovation.

Over his signature.

Pants for "pantaloons."

Partially for "partly."

Parties for "persons."

Past two weeks for "last two weeks" and all similar expressions relating to a definite time.

Poetess.

Portion for "part."

Posted for "informed."

Progress for "advance."

Quite prefixed to "good," "large," etc.

Raid for "attack."

Realized for "obtained."

Reliable for "trustworthy."

Repudiate for "reject" or "disown."

Retire as an active verb.

Rev. for "the Rev."

Rôle for "part."

Roughs.

Rowdies.

Secesh.

Sensation for "noteworthy event."

Standpoint for "point of view."

State for "say."

Taboo.

Talent for "talents," or "ability."

Talented.

Tapis.

The deceased.

The United States, as a singular noun.

Transpire for "occur."

Via for "by the way of."

Vicinity for "neighborhood."

Wall street slang generally, "bulls, bears, long, short, corner, tight, moribund, comatose," etc.

Wharves for "wharfs."

Which with a noun, as "which man."

Would seem for "seems."

Prepositions are troublesome little elfs. Particularly do "at" and "to" seem to be slippery eels to handle. We read: Smith stood "to" one side; the entrance was "to" the right; the man was "to" the front; Canada is "to" the north. In the foregoing examples "at"

should have been substituted for "to." The rule is simple: When permanency or rest is implied, "at" should be used. When the statement expresses motion, "to" is the right word. Example: John was at the fence—John went to the fence.

For the sake of brevity many prepositions may be omitted in newspaper writing. In the following examples the quoted words are not needed: Consult "with"; met "with"; alongside "of"; next "to"; opposite "to"; pass "to"; hand "to"; accept "of"; rise "up"; lift "up"; approve "of"; converse "together"; crave "for"; "over" again; first "of all"; last "of all"; determined "upon"; "along" with; join "with"; worthy "of"; fainted "away."

"That," when used as a connective, may usually be omitted. An example will illustrate: "It was said that the committee was informed that Mr. Jones could not attend, and that it would be necessary to postpone the investigation."

By omitting the "thats" in the foregoing, the sentence will read more easily, and the sense will not be disturbed.

In every large newspaper establishment are special rules of style that govern in the preparation of copy. Some of these are the pets of cranks, but many are founded on good sense. The writer has collected some of the more sensible, and gives them here. These

may be studied with profit by every ambitious newspaper writer.

Don't say "lady" when you mean "woman." Say "saleswoman," not "saleslady." The latter is as vulgar as "salesgentleman."

Don't say "gents." "Gentlemen" is the word. "Gents'" furnishings should be "men's" furnishings.

Don't say "resides." "Lives" is a much better word.

Don't say "destroyed by fire." "Burned" is shorter and stronger.

Don't say "good shape," when "good condition" is right.

Don't say "bursted." There is no such word. "Burst" is right. And don't say "bust."

Don't say "a widow lady." The social distinction attempted in the expression is a vulgarism.

Don't say "onto." It is a vulgarism.

Don't say "on a street." The better expression is "in a street."

Don't say "arrested and put in jail." "Arrested" is sufficient. The rest is implied.

Don't say "a man by the name of John Brown." "John Brown" is sufficient.

Don't say "a young woman eighteen years old." "Young" is a repetition.

Don't say "suicided." The word does not exist.

Don't say "party," when "person" is the right word.

Don't say "committed suicide by shooting himself." "Himself" is unnecessary.

Don't say "female" for "woman." It is vulgar, and "female" may be an animal.

Don't use "per" except with Latin words. The expressions "per day," "per yard," etc., should be "a day," "a yard," etc.

Don't use "balance" where "rest" or "remainder" should be used. "Balance" is used in connection with accounts and measures.

Don't say "John Brown was married to Sarah Smith." The woman marries the man, hence the names should be transposed.

Don't say "occurred" when the event "took place." To "occur," the event must happen without having been expected. Elections and marriages do not occur, but take place.

Don't precede the names of the days of the week by the preposition "on." "It was on Monday" is bad.

Don't use the word "consummation" in writing of a marriage ceremony. If you want to know why, ask a lawyer. Then think of this statement found in half the accounts of marriage ceremonies: "The ceremony

was consummated in the presence of the many friends of the contracting parties."

Don't say "performs upon an instrument," when the person "plays" upon it. To perform is to make oneself ridiculous.

Don't misuse "healthy" and "healthful." A person is "healthy"; an article of food, "healthful."

Don't misuse "occasion." An occasion is something that happens out of the order of events.

Don't misuse "rock" and "stone." Rock is a large mass. Rocks are never thrown.

Don't say a man is a blacksmith "by trade." His being a blacksmith implies he has a trade.

Don't confound "audience" and "spectators." An "audience" is composed of hearers.

Don't say "state" for "say." The lawyer "states" his case when he makes it known formally and specifically. We never "state" things in conversation.

Don't say "administered a blow," when you mean "dealt." And do not use "administer" when "give" is right.

Don't say "sick" for "ill." "Sick" now has a specific meaning.

Don't say "residence." You have the good words "home" and "house."

Don't say "for some time past" or "for some time to come." "Past" and "to come" are not needed.

Don't use "anticipate" for "expect." The words do not mean the same thing.

Don't say "drowned like rats," "wet as rats," etc. The expressions are too old.

Don't say "was the recipient of." "Received" is a much better word.

Don't say "appreciate" when you mean "enjoy." "Appreciating" means estimating justly.

Don't say "a man will locate in Chicago." We "locate" a building or a tract of land, but not a person.

Don't say "a man is stopping at a hotel." "Staying" is the right word.

Don't say "elicit" when "get" is the right word. To elicit is to draw out against the will.

Don't say "peruse." "Read" is a much better word.

Don't use a word taken or derived from another language if there is an Anglo-Saxon word that conveys the meaning.

Don't use "discover" improperly. It means to disclose what has existed. Flames are "seen," not "discovered."

Don't use "dirt" improperly. "Dirt" is not earth or soil, but foul matter.

Don't use "got" for "have." "Got" denotes attainment; "have," possession.

Don't say "old veteran." "Veteran" is sufficient.

Don't say "a distance of twenty feet," "the sum of \$1,000," etc. Say "twenty feet," "\$1,000," etc.

Don't use a plural verb after "politics," "whereabouts," etc.

Don't say "the past few days" for "the last few days."

Don't say "the above" when referring to "the foregoing."

Don't use "reliable" for "trustworthy."

Don't say "at an early hour this morning." If necessary, name the hour. Otherwise say "early this morning."

Don't say "section" for "region." A section is a large territory, as the western half of the United States. A region is a small district.

Don't say "a dead body was found." A person is not a body until he is dead.

Don't personify an inanimate object by referring to it as "she." A ship may be referred to as "she."

Don't use "Mr." before a man's name, except when the Christian name is not given.

Don't use "pretty" as an adverb. It is an adjective. "Pretty well" is not right.

Don't use the title "Hon." except in connection with the names of distinguished foreigners. Say "Congressman," "Senator," "President," etc.

It may be interesting to note in this connection how

some of the best writers work to prepare good English.

William Allan White, who two years ago became famous through an editorial in his newspaper, *The Emporia (Kan.) Gazette*, and later through his books, says of his work: "I hold a plot in my head at least a month—sometimes six months. Then I write it out; revise that copy; copy it on the typewriter; revise that copy; interline, rearrange, cut down, pad out, and fix up; copy it again; revise that copy at least twice, and then whack it to pieces in the proof till the proof looks like a railroad map". No wonder "*The Boy from Boyville*" is a masterpiece. It is such painstaking work that makes not only great authors but great newspaper men.

Opie Read, who for many years was a versatile newspaper man and who founded and successfully conducted *The Arkansaw Traveller*, is guided in his work more by his feelings and inclinations than by any method of drudgery. He has said of his work: "I can write or I can't, one or the other, as might naturally be supposed. I try of a morning, and if I find the atmosphere clear between me and things which do not exist, I work with ease. But if the atmosphere is murky, I put up the shutters of the mimic shop, and live for the day among books—Shakespeare. At evening I take down the shutters and light the lamps; and

if I can write then, I do; if I can't, I snort a contempt at myself and leave off trying."

It is not known whether Gen. Lew Wallace has done newspaper work. His clear writing indicates he has. He begins to write about 9 o'clock in the morning and works until noon. Resumes between 1 and 2 in the afternoon, and continues until 4. Then he exercises for two hours. He walks or rides horseback, according to the weather. When it rains he puts on a pair of heavy boots and trudges five to seven miles across the country. He usually rides a dozen miles. He retires at 9:30 and rises at 7:30, aiming to secure nine hours' sleep. He smokes at pleasure, a pipe or cigar, but never a cigarette. The amount of work he produces in a day varies greatly. Sometimes he writes 400 and sometimes 1,200 words. What he writes to-day in the rough is revised to-morrow morning to perhaps twenty words, or perhaps striking it out altogether and beginning at the same point once more. That constitutes the second copy. When the proofs come from the publisher another revision takes place. It consists chiefly of condensation and expurgation. It is such painstaking work that produced "Ben Hur." It is said that while writing this book he spent three days searching for an adjective to describe the moon as it appears at times in the Orient. And we marvel at the wonderful fascination of the book.

Mr. Chatfield-Taylor began his literary work as editor of and principal contributor to America, a weekly newspaper devoted principally to literature, art and politics. He invariably writes in pencil. He never uses a desk, but sits curled up in an easy chair. His first draft in pencil is given to a typewriter, by whom it is transcribed. He corrects the work carefully and has it gone over again. He usually plans his work in advance, making a synopsis of each chapter. But his last book, "The Vice of Fools," was written without a plan. The first chapter was written before the second was thought out, and so on to the end. The book, except the last two chapters, was in type before the last chapters were written.

John R. Musick was led to authorship by doing newspaper work. He works eight, ten, and even twelve hours a day. After 6 in the evening he starts for a stroll, which often continues until near midnight. If he is to write a book he goes carefully over it, making notes before beginning the work. Then he takes a sheet of legal cap, folds it lengthwise, and on that writes the chapter headings on one side, and the characters and localities on the other. Then in a separate book he writes a synopsis of what each chapter is to contain, and seldom changes the plot. When this is done he goes to work, never waiting for an inspiration, but driving away and working up an inspiration. If

a publisher wants a sketch of travel, an illustrated article or a book, Musick only asks the nature of the article, the number of words required, and, like Anthony Trollope, will give the time to a day when the manuscript may be expected. His chirography is said to be as illegible as that of Horace Greeley, and but for the typewriter, he would have to go out of the business.

John Clark Ridpath has not been a newspaper man. He took naturally to literary production, and has performed many tasks. Until he was forty years old he wrote exclusively with his own hand. He wrote so constantly that the forefinger of his right hand was permanently bent under by holding the pen and pencil. Then he acquired the habit of dictation; and this habit he has reduced to perfection. He greatly prefers the forenoon for his serious work. Towards evening he tries to relieve himself of the literary strain. He is active, and goes forth into the open air as much as possible. He mingles with men and studies affairs with the keenest relish. He dictates with extraordinary facility and precision. Revision is rarely necessary. His first copy may be sent to the printer with little likelihood that it will require alteration or emendation. His strongest work is produced under the greatest stress. His temperament is excitable. His speech and manner are of the nervous, sanguine

type. His mental and bodily vigor are almost excessive. Work and conflict are necessary to his existence. When the work has been performed and the conflict settled to his liking he goes readily to sleep and sleeps the sleep of the just.

Miss Lilian Bell is so prominent as a writer that this chatty account of how she works is interesting:

"How do I write? I am sure I don't know. I never write twice alike. Nothing ever happens twice alike when I am writing except that as soon as I get well into a story the 'old friend of the family' who calls me 'Lillie', and never can realize that I do more than play at writing, is sure to come, and I am summoned to the drawing room, regardless of the fact that 'genius burns,' as Jo said. I can be excused to new friends. To those who knew me as a child—never! They always have 'feelings' which are not to be hurt. I only wish these 'old friends of the family' knew how many stories are lying—named and half finished—in my desk, and which will never see the light of day, because I can never get back to the same vein. I couldn't do it to save my life.

"I always get my climax first. Then I name the story. Then I write the last paragraph. Then I begin it. I always put the keynote of the whole story into the first sentence. I always try to have the kernel of the story in the last sentence. I carry the charac-

ters in my mind from the moment I discover a story until it ripens of itself, and the whole thing from start to finish (with perhaps an exception as to conversation, which grows as I write it) is written as clearly in my mind as it ever appears on a printed page. The characters are so distinct in my mind that if a person does a certain thing it comes to me, 'That is exactly what so-and-so would have done in my story.' So then in the story I have so-and-so do it. That is the only way I ever 'gather material'. My stories are always from within. What I gather is quite accidental, and always is in regard to detail. I write rapidly, at long sittings, and at a blue-white heat. I once promised a Christmas story at three days' notice, and wrote seven thousand words in ten 'hours without stopping. But I felt the effects of the strain for two weeks. I never can do my best work with deliberation. I write in a mental blaze and only correct and revamp that which I force myself to write. When it comes spontaneously it may not be perfect, but it is the best that I can do. I am so much, so entirely each character that I write, that I never enjoy discussing them with anyone. It always seems that they are always my own self, private property, and that not even intimate friends have a right to pry into the whys and wherefores of intimate things I tell about my men and women who are so much me. I write at any time

that the fancy strikes me—or rather, when the story or chapter is ripe, when it grows too big and too strong to be held any longer, then it makes me write. I no longer have anything to do with it. I am then but an animated writing machine.”

These brief accounts of how some writers work may seem out of place here. They are not, in that they indicate what is necessary for conscientious work and methodical arrangement. Newspaper writing differs from other writing only in that it must be done more quickly. This makes it the more necessary that the newspaper writer should have learned every detail of his art, that he may be able not only to plan his story in a few minutes, but to put it on paper in an interesting way as rapidly as he can make his pencil fly. The study of methods will help him do this.

In newspaper work it seems the most important things happen at the last moment. As an illustration, three hours before the last copy must be handed in something occurs that is worth one or two columns. The information received in the city room is so indefinite that a reporter must be sent out. It takes twenty minutes to reach the scene. He spends an hour in getting the facts. Twenty more minutes are needed to get back to the office, leaving him an hour and twenty minutes in which to write from fifteen hundred to three thousand words, to be, perhaps, the

most important story in that issue of the paper. That reporter must have a keen dramatic instinct, and be capable of arranging in a few minutes the important facts and to group the details around these in a way that will make the story striking. By the time he reaches the office he will have made an outline of the story as he intends to write it. He will also have worded his opening paragraphs and thought out the language in which to present the most important facts. A few minutes after he has sat down at his table he will hand the city editor the first sheets of copy, and more will follow every few minutes with surprising regularity. He will spend no time waiting for inspiration. And yet, when the story is completed an hour later it will have the essential elements of the drama, the novel, and the descriptive work.

The country newspaper man has excellent opportunities to do good work. If he is possessed of latent ability and will work, he can make a mark for himself. It is surprising how many of the bright newspaper men of the cities owe their positions to the good work they did on country newspapers. The young country newspaper man should have enough ambition and energy to not only dress up his news matter in good style and form, but to prepare spicy special features. In addition to the special articles and sketches described under another heading in this book,

nothing helps the paper as much as a line of articles that are the distinctive property of the paper. As illustrious examples in the past may be mentioned the Nasby letters in the Toledo Blade, and the Lime Kiln Club papers in the Detroit Free Press. It is not supposed that every ambitious young country newspaper man can do anything equal to these. Neither would it be sensible to waste such ability on a little country paper. They are given as an illustration of the idea sought to be expressed. If the man has inventive and writing ability, he will find subjects to suit the conditions of his community.

Above everything, young country newspaper man, be not a fossil. The water in the pool becomes stagnant, while the running water is always fresh. The stone that remains at rest becomes moss covered. Don't become a mossback. If you are disposed to heed this advice, take a little more: Don't move the way the crab does—you move forward. If each passing year does not leave your style improved, quit the business for one in which style is not required.

THE LAW.

The newspaper writer should be familiar with the law of libel and slander. To become well grounded in the principles of this law he should read a good common law text-book on the subject. As the different states have enacted laws governing this matter in each state, he should also read the statutes of the state in which the paper for which he writes is published. He will find that in some states the law is very rigid, while in others it gives the writer unnatural freedom.

Whatever the statute law may be, good taste and business policy demand that the utmost vigilance be exercised that libelous matter may not find its way into the paper. To insure its not doing so the writer should guard against its creeping into the copy, even though the matter passes through the hands of an editor or a copy reader. As long as human depravity exists there will be times when the newspaper writer feels tempted to write things that the law will not permit to be printed. A little coloring or shading to add emphasis may do the mischief. The most prolific source of libel, however, is in the writer being misinformed. The law is queer on this point, and the

writer must know his ground or he will get himself into trouble.

The essence of any wrong is the intent. To commit a wrong there must be malicious intent. But the law holds that certain acts committed by a sane person are in themselves proof of malicious intent. For example, if a man stabs another with a knife, the malicious intent is admitted to have existed on the grounds that he knew what the effect of his act would be, and a person is held responsible for his acts.

Publishing libelous matter is held to be done with malicious intent. It matters not whether the publisher prepared the libelous matter or whether he got it from some one else. Neither does it matter whether he knew it to be false. If he took it from some one else it is not a defense that he did not know it was false. He is held to know whether it is true or false. He is put upon notice of its libelous or slanderous character, and is in duty bound to ascertain the truth before publishing. Neither can he publish libelous matter furnished by some one else, and escape punishment by printing a notice that he does not assume responsibility for the matter. It is the circulating of libelous matter that constitutes the offense. It does not matter how much libelous stuff is written, if it is not circulated there is no offense.

A libel is a published statement not justified by facts that affects a person's professional standing, his business affairs or his character as an individual and a citizen. The following are libels:

To charge a person with having committed some act cognizable by the criminal law.

To charge a person with being afflicted with an infectious disease that renders him unpleasant or dangerous to company, and that will cause persons to shun him.

To charge a person with immorality, that will cause such person to be shunned, or that will affect his business interests.

To charge a man with being a Democrat when he is publicly known to be a Populist is a libel, because it affects his social and business standing. But to call a man a crank, a rascal, a liar, an arrant rogue, an unnatural father, or an ungrateful son, has been held not to be a libel.

A libel, on the face of it, is to call a man a thief. But if it can be proved that he has been convicted of theft, the libelous matter is justifiable and no action lies.

The writer must be careful to learn whether the common law or statute law governs in his state. Under the common law the truth can not be submitted as evidence in a case of libel. The common law

holds that giving the truth as evidence in defense in an action for libel is in itself a libel, in that it is publishing matter to the injury of the plaintiff's character and business. He who publishes libelous matter under the common law has no recourse by way of justification by proving the truth of the matter published. This principle of the law is right; but it works an apparent hardship, and for this reason it has been modified by statutes in most of the states so that the truth may be given in justification. Where the law has been so modified, anything that can be proved to be true may be printed.

A picture may as well as words be a libel. In these days of newspaper cartoons the line of libel is frequently approached very closely.

When words are spoken, that would be libel if printed and circulated, it is slander. The distinction rests on the way the libelous matter is communicated to third parties.

To constitute a libel it is not enough that the libelous matter be printed; it must also be circulated so as to reach third parties.

The publishing of a libel is not justified by its having been done by one in the employ of the publisher of the paper in which the libel appears. The employer is responsible for the acts of his employes while they

are engaged in the line of work to which he has assigned them.

There is no greater offense in newspaper work than to involve the paper with which one is connected in an action for libel. This is the one thing against which the writer must always guard. He must not, however, go too far in his apprehension. It is possible for him to become so apprehensive of danger in this direction that he will see a libel in every racy story and thus suffer the remorse of being "scooped" by a more discerning and daring rival. This emphasizes the necessity of a careful study of the law of libel. It may be added that as a means of making the subject clear, the libel cases that have been passed upon by the supreme court of the state should be read carefully.

The skillful writer will not and need not resort to matter that is libelous. If for the public good it becomes necessary to "sit" on some person, it should not be done by writing matter that is libelous. Neither should it be done by writing invective matter. While these methods may have some effect in the direction intended, they will act as a boomerang and injure the paper in which they are used quite as much if not more than they will the subject of the tirade.

For example, in making an effort to defeat a man for public office, repeated tirades against his char-

acter and record will not accomplish the purpose, because of the manifest motive of the paper. A much better course is to use the news columns. Search his past. Examine his public record if he has one. Print the truth, but print only that which will operate against him. At some time he must have said something that does not substantiate his present position. Get the facts and print such as will stand against him. If the writer can connect these facts with a mild sarcasm and breezy comment they will bring about in the surest way the end sought.

A good example of the effect of this plan was given in the Chicago mayoralty campaign in 1893. The city was confessedly republican. The democrats nominated an educated, and the republicans an uneducated man. Both made a vigorous campaign, speaking nearly every evening during the canvass. The democratic nominee owned a newspaper. In this the speeches of the two candidates were printed exactly as delivered. The contrast was so great that many became ashamed to vote for their party's candidate.

A common uncertainty prevails among publishers as to what the law is that governs in paying for a newspaper. In some states statutes governing the subject have been enacted. Where this has been done the subject is easily disposed of. It simply follows to comply with the conditions of the statute. If there is

no statute, the common law applies. One very pronounced principle of that law is that when a person has had the usufruct or benefit of a thing he is bound to pay for it whatever it commands in the public market. For example, if A has a field of corn that needs cultivation, and B enters the field and cultivates the corn, and A seeing B at work says nothing to B, but lets B continue working, A is held to pay B whatever is the price of that work in the community. There need not have been any further contract about it. In seeing B at work A had notice of the work being done. By not notifying B to stop working A consented to receive the benefit of B's work, and the law says A shall pay B what the work is worth.

If A publishes a newspaper and sends it regularly to B, and B accepts it, the law holds that by accepting the use and benefit of the paper B impliedly agrees to pay for it. And the law says he shall pay for it. But whenever A receives notice that B does not want the paper any longer, and B does not accept the paper after giving such notice, the period of implied subscription ends, and A can not collect for any copies of the paper sent B after such notice, unless B continues to accept the paper.

The widely circulated statement that B can not stop his subscription until he pays all arrearages is not law. B can stop his subscription at any time by

giving proper notice to A. B can pay what he owes whenever he is ready to do so, or when with the aid of the law A compels him to do so.

But while this is the law, it is not good business policy to take advantage of it. A newspaper should be sent to those persons only who have ordered it sent to them, unless it is sent as a gift or as sample copies. A few dollars picked up by invoking the law will be very costly in the effect that such a policy will have on the standing of the paper. Make a good paper that the people will want, and for which they will deem it a pleasure to pay.











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